

Dale Hollow

National Fish Hatchery

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Andrew L. Currie, Hatchery Manager
Dale Hollow NFH
50 Fish Hatchery Road
Celina, TN 38551
Phone: 931/243 2443
Fax: 931/243 3962
E-mail: r4fr_dhtn@fws.gov

Station Facts

- Established: 1965.
- Number of staff: seven permanent and one temporary.
- Annual budget (FY 98) \$369,000.

Geographic Area Covered

- Cumberland River Basin, TN (mitigation)—Wolf River, Center Hill Lake/Tailwater (TW), Dale Hollow Lake/TW.
- Little Tennessee River Basin, TN (mitigation)—Calderwood Reservoir (Res.)/TW, Chilhowee Res./TW, Tellico Res./TW.
- Hiawasse River Basin, TN (mitigation)—Hiawasse River, Ocoee River.
- Holston River Basin, TN (mitigation)—Ft. Patrick Henry Res./TW, South Holston Res./TW, Wilbur Res./TW, Watauga Res./TW.
- Duck River Basin, TN (mitigation)—Normandy Res./TW.
- Clinch River Basin, TN (mitigation)—Norris Res./TW
- Elk River Basin, TN (mitigation) Timm's Ford Res./TW.
- Northern Georgia (mitigation)—Federal Water Development Projects.
- Sipsey River Basin, AL (mitigation)—Lewis Smith Lake/TW.

Station Goals

- Provide rainbow, brown, and lake trout for mitigation stocking in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama.
- Provide a refuge for threatened and endangered aquatic species and develop techniques required to culture these species.
- Assist Tribal governments in managing fisheries resources on Tribal lands.
- Implement a thorough, perennial hatchery product evaluation program.

- Provide environmental education.
- Develop and maintain partnerships with chambers of commerce, state tourist departments and other agencies to promote regional support for the fish hatchery.
- Establish and maintain a "Friends Group" to gain community support for the fish hatchery.

Fish Species and Capability

- Rainbow trout (mitigation) 244,135 lbs. with 817,850 fish at 9"; 7,891 lbs. with 284,000 fish at 4-7".
- Brown trout (mitigation) 23,110 lbs. with 110,000 fish at 8" 320 lbs. with 100,000 fish at 2".
- Lake trout (mitigation) 2,718 lbs. with 50,000 fish at 6".

Public Use Opportunities

- More than 40,000 visitors yearly.
- Hatchery tours.
- Off-site presentations.
- Aquarium/visitor center.
- Walking/exercise road.
- Public fishing area.

Calendar of Events

May: International Migratory Bird Day Celebration.

June: Annual Kids Fishing Derby.

To be announced: Open House.

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Questions and Answers

What kind of fish do you raise?

Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery is a coldwater fish hatchery which means we raise fish that do best in water temperatures between 45° and 65° F. Current species in production at this facility include rainbow trout, brown trout, and lake trout.

How big are the fish when they are released?

The vast majority of rainbow trout reared at this facility are used for put-and-take stocking. This type of program requires continuous stocking of 9-inch fish in waters which typically experience intense fishing pressure and little natural reproduction. A 9-inch fish is considered large enough for fishermen to keep.

All of the lake trout and brown trout are used for put-grow-and-take programs. Lake trout are stocked at a size of 6 inches. These fish are stocked into reservoirs having conditions conducive to good growth and survival. Brown trout are managed by stocking tailwaters that will support small fish with 2-inch fingerlings. Waters which have proved not to generate high survivability when stocked with smaller fish, receive stockings of 8-inch brown trout. Nature grows these put-grow-and-take fish to a harvestable size.

Where do you stock the fish?

All of the brown and lake trout and most of the rainbow trout reared at Dale Hollow are stocked in and below U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) impoundments in Tennessee.

Fingerling rainbow trout are also supplied to the State of Georgia. These fish are transferred to a state fish hatchery where they are grown to a harvestable size and are subsequently stocked in and below TVA impoundments in Georgia. In addition, catchable size rainbow trout are stocked in the tailwater of Lewis Smith Lake in Alabama.

How do you get the eggs from the fish?

Spawning operations are not conducted at this hatchery. Fertilized eggs are received from other federal hatcheries by overnight shipping in special egg-shipping cartons and are placed into incubator trays. As they hatch they are placed into tanks to grow.

Rainbow trout eggs are generally available from July through the middle of April. Brown and lake trout eggs are only available from the middle of October to the end of December.

Stocking trout is not “natural” is it?

Stocking non-native species of trout is not “natural” but neither are dams. Dams perform critical functions such as flood control and hydro-electric power generation; but, there is a down side to dams. Construction of a dam, regardless of its type, alters the entire river ecosystem.

Dams often produce large, deep reservoirs in which the water stratifies into temperature layers during the summer. The water released downstream into the tailwater comes from a deep, cool layer. This newly created coldwater habitat does not provide conditions necessary for populations of native warmwater fish to be self-sustaining. Trout stocking is carried out in order to utilize the available coldwater habitat and to mitigate for the impacts that these water development projects have on the respective river ecosystems.